

HUC-JIR'S Wexner Graduate Fellows

(continued from page 7)

Fellows, guiding them in decision-making with regard to courses and careers.

Wexner Graduate Fellowship alumni can also be found on the HUC-JIR faculty, including **Dr. Alyssa Gray**, Assistant Professor of Codes and Responsa Literature at HUC-JIR/NY and **Dr. Jonathan Krasner**, Assistant Professor of American Jewish History at HUC-JIR/Cincinnati.

Dr. Aaron Panken, Dean of HUC-JIR/New York and a Wexner Fellowship alumnus, continues to be involved with the Program as a member of its faculty. He teaches professional skills development at the Wexner Graduate Fellowship Institute. For the past five years he has also worked with the Director of the Alumni Institute in teaching a session that transitions the Fellows to the next level as Wexner Graduate Fellowship alumni. "As a Wexner Fellow,

I was given a set of resources I would not normally have access to," explains Panken. "The combination of learning tools, peer mentorship, and the network of people I was exposed to are resources I still utilize today." Recently, Panken, along with his Wexner classmate, Rabbi Dov Weiss from Yeshivat Chovevei Torah Rabbinical School, brought together their Reform and Orthodox students for dinner and dialogue. It was a rare opportunity for both groups of students to discuss issues that affect their respective movements and to learn more about each other.

In this and so many ways, HUC-JIR's Wexner Graduate Fellows bring the enrichment of the Program back into the fabric of student life and learning on campus. Together with their classmates, they are builders of the Reform Movement and the Jewish People.

And Rachel Stole the Idols The Emergence of Modern Hebrew Women's Writing

(continued from page 17)

At this point in the poem, the speaker steals the poetic/prophetic language of Ezekiel 8:2-4 as a means of expressing her own vision of inspiration. Suddenly, the poet speaker sees a huge flame that takes hold of a lock of her hair [*tsitsit roshi*], sets her on fire, and carries her aloft. The poem reaches its climax as the female speaker, hovering in the heavens, proclaims herself sevenfold as bright as the (male-gendered) sun, an allusion to Isaiah 30:26, where the prophet foresees that "on the day that the Lord binds up the breach of his people, and heals the stroke of their wound," the light will be "sevenfold, as the light of seven days." As in the case of the Ezekiel reference, this biblical allusion endows Bat-Miriam's

vision with a prophetic importance. More precisely, Bat-Miriam's speaker seizes upon the language of prophecy as a means of giving voice to her countertraditional poetic vision. David Jacobson reads this poem as transforming "Ezekiel's vision of a fiery God who causes the prophet to view Israel's evil into a vision of a cruel sun-god who implants an evil fiery passion within the speaker and shouts at her." According to Jacobson, in these early poems Bat-Miriam "conveys her longing to discover the image of a divine being who could serve as a positive alternative to the cruel uncaring image of the shouting, bursting sun-god." Contrary to Jacobson's reading, I would argue that Bat-Miriam is championing herself

over the sun-god and celebrating her superior form of illumination, even as she seems to apologize for it. Yes, the poem describes an explosive daytime encounter between the speaker and the screaming sun, but the speaker bravely and proudly announces that in her inspired state she is sevenfold as bright as the sun. The speaker relishes rather than rails against this poetic confrontation.

The combination of audacity and trepidation evident in these early poems by Bat-Miriam is a widespread feature of early Hebrew women's writing both in the Diaspora and the Land of Israel. These women knew well that they were treading on territory previously off-limits to them. It was their unprecedented task to cross into these spaces, seize the language, and transform it into something new, even as it echoes or borrows from tradition. On occasion, they faltered in this task, but more often than not they triumphed.

In Memoriam

Muriel Berman

Loving mother of Nancy Berman, Director Emerita of the HUC-JIR Skirball Museum, whose devotion to Jewish learning and the arts endures as a source of inspiration.

Jane Evans

Cherished honorary alumna of HUC-JIR and Director Emerita of the Women of Reform Judaism, whose visionary leadership advanced human rights and whose love for the arts beautified the HUC-JIR/New York campus.

JoAnn Morrison

Beloved friend of HUC-JIR, whose devotion to HUC-JIR/Jerusalem, which she shared with her husband, David, found expression in generous support for its programs and the establishment of its Hallel Community Choir.

Peggy Weil Steine

Dedicated member of the Cincinnati Board of Overseers and the Board of Governors and, together with her husband, David Steine, z"l, a generous supporter of HUC-JIR.

Laurence A. Tisch

Esteemed friend of the College-Institute; beloved father of Andrew Tisch, a member of the President's Council; and beloved father-in-law of Bonnie Tisch, a member of the Board of Governors, whose visionary philanthropy and leadership to strengthen Judaism were recognized by HUC-JIR's Award for Distinguished Jewish Service.